

REMARKS

Pursuant to the present amendment, claims 1, 5, 10, 11, 22, 24, 27, 28 and 30 have been amended, claims 4, 26 and 31-35 have been canceled and new claims 36-40 have been added. Thus, claims 1-3, 5-25, 27-30 and 36-40 are pending in the present application. No new matter has been introduced by way of the present amendment. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein.

In the Office Action, claims 2, 4-9, 23-28 and 30 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Office Action, p. 7. Pursuant to the present amendment, new independent claims 36, 37, 38 and 40 have been added to present dependent claims 2, 23, 24 and 30, respectively, in independent form. Thus, it is believed that new claims 36-40 are allowable.

On September 19, 2005, the undersigned called Examiner Sarkar regarding the statement in paragraph 13 of the Office Action that claims 10-21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The call was placed because claim 10 is an independent claim. Examiner Sarkar confirmed that there were no prior art rejections of claims 10-21. Examiner Sarkar further stated the only issue that need to be addressed with respect to these claims was the claim formalities noted on page 2 of the Office Action.

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted various informalities associated with claims 10, 11, 22, 24, 26 and 30. Pursuant to the present amendment, it is believed that these minor deficiencies have been corrected. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Pursuant to the present amendment, claims 30-35 have been canceled. It should be understood that in canceling claims 30-35, Applicants do not acquiesce in the appropriateness of

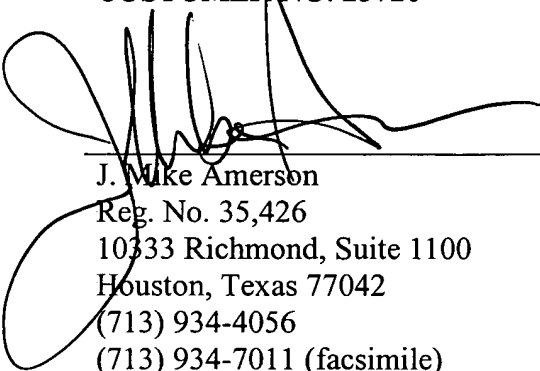
the Examiner's rejections. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue claims of the scope set forth in the rejected claims in a later filed application should they desire to do so.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (713) 934-4055 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 20, 2005



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